



# Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting (SAC) February 7, 2008

## Meeting Summary

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### **SAC Attendees: 41 (see Exhibit A)**

#### **Other Attendees:**

- Byron Rushing
- Marianne Tomashefski

#### **COA Staff Attendees**

- Heather Alhadeff
- Shelley Peart
- Jeffrey Williams
- Phillip Harris

#### **Project Team Attendees**

- John Funny
- Paul Moore
- Grady Smith
- Theodore Williams
- Daniel Vargas
- Gordon Burkette
- Sarah Constantine

Phillip Harris opened the meeting by welcoming committee members, introducing the Project Team and reviewing the meeting agenda. He then introduced Paul Moore who gave a PowerPoint presentation focusing on the traditional transportation planning process and the methodological approach that will be used for the Connect Atlanta Plan. Over time, land uses change, whereas the transportation network stays relatively the same. A major theme of the Connect Atlanta Plan technique is instead of land use determining trip generation and subsequent transportation improvements, transportation planning and improvements should determine land use. In this manner, transportation improvements will anticipate and accommodate growth instead of reacting to it. More specifically, if a human scale of walkability, environmental, fiscal, and neighborhood sustainability objectives are adhered to, a harmonious regional strategy should result and produce a balanced menu of equitable transportation choices that accommodate growth. P. Moore also outlined the upcoming Planning Workshops and what to expect.

Following the presentation, committee members were organized into four discussion groups to help expand key topics that will be introduced at the upcoming Planning Workshops. Facilitation Teams rotated among the groups to discuss the following topics:

- Transit
- Hot Spots
- Freight/Trucking
- Sidewalks/Walking

The results of the four facilitated group discussions are summarized below:

## **1. Transit**

### **Discussion Points:**

- What, if anything, would make you more likely to use transit regularly
- How should we decide where rail (streetcar/light rail) is appropriate and where bus (full size or shuttle) is a better fit
- Should potential ridership from existing developed areas or potential investment/redevelopment of new areas be a bigger focus of transit investment
- Would transit frequency for bus or rail be a strategy you think would help increase ridership
- Do you feel ridership increases would help reduce auto traffic

### **Comments:**

- MARTA reliability is an issue
- Marketing: more could be done
- Provide effective marketing of the transit system
- Provide signs on buses, transit zones, convenience, schedules at stops
- Rail system not sufficient
- Better bus stops
- Bus stops are not pleasant
  - ❑ safety issues
- Bus stops not properly marked – electric message boards needed at stops to display schedule information
- More passenger shelters
- No heavy rail for interior Atlanta
- Provide dedicated lanes for buses
- Dedicated ROW where available
- Make it obvious that a lane is for buses
- Buses caught in congestions
- Rail is preferred technology
- Trains first, then buses
- Provide trolley services
- Use in-road system instead of overhead wires for streetcars
- Instead of tracks, use rubber tire trolleys
- Provide more frequent service - shorter headways during non-peak hours
- Faster service
- Need more express buses to places, especially malls and especially on weekends

- More express bus routes needed to connect different parts of the city or major destinations, not just for commuters
- Better connections
- Need to provide internal connections (east-west not just north-south) – intown circulators
- Go to places where people actually go – east/west connections
- Feeder systems for neighborhoods
- Fewer hazards
- Park and ride lots
- Efficiency
- Use the same fare systems between various transit operators
- Direct routes, less transfers
- Study the traffic patterns when selecting routes
- Rail does not currently go where it is needed
- Safety not an issue – officers always present
- Safety: robberies on/at stations and on trains at night.
- Address safety through design: better sight lines, lighting at stations
- Provide higher densities around stations
- Transit should be combined with land use changes
  - ❑ Land use should respond to transit and transportation options
- Transit can help to guide growth
- Improvement of the overall stations
- Functionality of bike racks on buses – they don't always work
- Signal prioritization
- Provide more options – attractive, connectable, reliable
- Shorter wait times
- Build rail system where traffic is actually coming from
- Rail system killed bus schedules in neighborhoods
- System needs to be subsidized by the state
- Drivers not willing to wait for riders
- Smaller neighborhoods need better connectivity
- Transit centers should be more welcoming and reflective of the neighborhood.
- Connectivity of the last mile

## 2. Hot Spots

Discussion Points:

- What unsafe or unwalkable areas are vital for us to consider during the workshops
- Congested intersections
- Geometric problems
- Points out delays in transit bus/rail or bike

Comments:

- Deckner Ave., Sylvan Road and Brewer Blvd.
  - ❑ Traffic circle versus traffic lights
- 166E – Sylvan/Lakewood Ave – Truck and Industrial Parks have heavy freight traffic

- ❑ Road is too narrow and need pedestrian enhancements, improved traffic signalization and lane enhancements
- ❑ Utility polls are being destroyed because of too narrow lanes
- ❑ Senior High Rise sits in this heavy industrial area that creates dangerous situations for regular and physically impaired traveling on street
- Metropolitan and Cleveland
  - ❑ No ADA enhancements – no sign for visual and hearing impaired
  - ❑ Sidewalks – too narrow for wheelchairs
  - ❑ Kroger CitiCenter Shopping Plaza – need for repair for impaired and regular pedestrians
- Cleveland and Perkerson Park – there are 4 overpasses that need improvement in lighting and drainage. Public art would be an improvement
- Metropolitan and RDA – signalization need improvement. Consider traffic circle concept
- I-20
  - ❑ Moreland, westbound exit – no traffic light for southbound traffic
  - ❑ Boulevard, westbound exit – two exit lanes with only 1 turn lane onto Boulevard
- Briarcliff, Ponce de Leon and Moreland
  - ❑ Briarcliff/Ponce – traffic is horrible. Improve signalization and insufficient left turn
  - ❑ Moreland from Ponce – improve signalization and pedestrian access
- I-85 and GA 400 merge – traffic stops because merge lanes are too short
- GA 400, I-85 and I-75 – merge lanes are too short and need to be lengthened
- I-20 eastbound onto I-75/85 – two lanes exiting northbound that blocks southbound traffic. Need dedicated southbound lane.
- Fairburn and Cascade Roads
  - ❑ Traffic is too heavy; no place for additional congestion and sidewalks
  - ❑ South on Fairburn – no sidewalks
- I-285 interchange from I-20W – cut off MLK exit and travel on Fairburn under bridge abutment – need additional lanes
- Buckhead – Piedmont, Roswell and Habersham
  - ❑ Alleyway between JW Marriott (formerly Swiss) Hotel – lack of signals creates a bottleneck for traffic entering Peachtree Road
  - ❑ Reduce entrance points onto Peachtree – combine access points to share among businesses
- Buckhead Loop and Piedmont Road – need to be more pedestrian friendly
- Roswell Road – not enough crosswalks and signals
- Peachtree Battle @ Habersham – separate for pedestrian and cars. Pedestrians often use bike lanes because landscape trucks force cars into additional lanes
- Monroe and 10<sup>th</sup> Street – difficult for pedestrians; there is a crosswalk only on one side
- Piedmont Park and 14<sup>th</sup> Street – pedestrian access is limited and needs improvement
- I-75/85 Fulton Street northbound exit – insufficient signalization and pedestrian access
- Too many one-way streets; consider changing to increase traffic flow particularly Spring, West Peachtree and Williams streets
- Williams Street exit
  - ❑ Difficult to turn left and re-enter highway
  - ❑ Entrance and exit ramps, north and south, are too congested
- Williams and Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd – insufficient signalization and traffic access
- Crosswalks should be painted a bright neon color
- Traffic signals not timed well for pedestrians – too short in duration (ex: Piedmont Hospital). As a result, mobility focused on car movements and not pedestrians

- Neighborhood and City speed limits should be lowered and enforced
- Peachtree and Lenox Road intersection – huge intersection that needs improvement
- Piedmont, North Ave., and Ponce de Leon – remove construction signs located on the sidewalks, which blocks 100% of pedestrian access (move into a travel lane)
- I-285 at Cascade Road exit – northbound lanes backup onto expressway due to congestion on Cascade. Improved signalization is needed (the signals frequently malfunctions)
- Bike lanes should be different color. Consider bike boxes as in NY and Europe that would allow bikes to turn left in front of cars
- Bicycle lanes need to be on streets that are more conducive to bicycles other than Peachtree. Possible Alternatives: could be to use Juniper/Courtland for Southbound and Piedmont for Northbound travel
- West Peachtree – bike lanes are too narrow (although they are in accordance with standards) especially for the volume of traffic. As a result, cyclist can get doored
- Atlantic Station bike lanes – too wide. As a result, cars drive in them
- I-85 toward Atlantic Station – merge too short and creates massive backup
- Castleberry Hill –Fair& Walker – not a “T” at stop. As a result, cut-thru traffic speeds and often does not stop at stop sign
- Garson and Piedmont – north and south – U turns should be disallowed
- Peachtree, West Peachtree and Pershing Point – improved signalization needed
- Spring and 14<sup>th</sup> Street – needs improvement
- Spring St. & 3<sup>rd</sup> – improve pedestrian crossings
- South on Piedmont toward Morningside
  - ❑ Left turn onto Morningside is a nightmare
  - ❑ Delivery trucks park and take-up an entire lane @Smith’s Bar (on Piedmont approaching Monroe Dr). Alternative is delivery truck could park on circular street directly across Piedmont.
- South on Peachtree @ Lindbergh – left turn cars protrude into Peachtree due to street curvature, creating dangerous conditions
- Mitchell @ Capitol Ave – shutdown during legislative session will create a congestion nightmare
- Ponce de Leon @ Kroger Shopping Center – turning left onto Ponce is a nightmare
- South on Ponce de Leon – trucks over 20’ should not be allowed to turn right on North Highland
- Courtland dumps onto International at very high speeds

### 3. Freight/Trucking

#### Discussion Points:

- Given that the City is committed to preserving some areas of industrial use, how can we effectively accommodate truck movements to and from these areas
- Do we want to consider re-use of rail facilities (such as railyards) if it means these functions would convert from rail to truck trips
- Truck routes may need to be re-analyzed. Do you fee that while undesirable, there are routes that need to be redesigned (new or validated) especially if part of a system
- Some intersections may need to be changed to accommodate truck traffic (which can help reduce vehicular congestion) but could be counter to QOL goals. What should we do in such situation

## Comments:

- Jonesboro Road and Henderson Mill Road is a HOT SPOT
- Identify where freight is coming from and going to
- Can pass-through freight be more effectively re-routed around Atlanta
- Charge pass through trucks
- Identify truck routes
- Can we negotiate with railroads for more quiet zones, and significantly more visual screening
- Need better enforcement to keep trucks off the 75-85 Connector
- Multi-task rail capacity; freight tracks can move commuters too
- Railroads are a part of our heritage
- Beltline and Hulseley yard dilemmas
- Sidewalks vs. rail traffic
- Land use and context should trump truck needs
- Make smaller trucks do the delivering in the city (some for, others against)
- Don't allow GDOT to classify roads
- GDOT is always negative towards pedestrian priorities
- New GDOT leadership is changing that orientation.
- How must we accommodate current business trends
- Trucks distribute goods, which is important but stink, make too much noise, and poison the air
- Smaller and quieter, cleaner trucks can be required
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- Currently zoned "industrial" land doesn't mean that it is appropriate for it to remain industrial
- Most industrial parcels were once served by rail lines and particularly rail sidings that have all too often been abandoned
- It is incompatible to have genuine industrial uses contiguous with dense urban residential areas
- In planning for transportation choices, we can and must develop a set of metrics that will balance the equities of all stakeholders

## 4. Sidewalks/Walking

### Discussion Points:

- Is a City goal of 100% sidewalk coverage a good thing
- Should the use of public funds to improve walking conditions be on par with transit and streets
- Should some areas (e.g. schools, transit centers, etc.) have a higher priority than others
- Is maintenance more important than new construction
- In non-priority areas, would a sidewalk on one side of the street be adequate
- How important are streetscapes along sidewalks

## Comments:

- 100 % City sidewalk coverage is a good thing
- Look at density, users and volumes to decide if sidewalks are needed on one or two sides of the street
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street should be focused on demand or at least along major streets in major neighborhoods
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- Sidewalks on one side of the street should depend on the traffic on that road or the neighborhoods that they are located
- If sidewalks are on one side of street, they can be balanced with bike lanes on the opposite side; share the road
- If sidewalks are not on both sides of the street and gaps exist, these gaps should be closed with crosswalks
- Sidewalks on one side of street should depend on the volume of traffic on the roadway (mixed opinion)
- Be smart with resources, sidewalks on every street in the city is not realistic
- Sidewalks on one side of the street are better than no sidewalks
- Sidewalks should depend on ROW considerations
- Priority for sidewalks should promote consistency and continuity in the system
- Priority areas should be around bus stops and stations, schools, churches, public facilities, employment centers, mixed use areas, etc
- Attention should be placed on curb cuts and ADA accessibility
- Should look at desire lines; respond to places where “goat-paths” exist
- Consider mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Mid-block crossings should be a policy
- Use impact fees on new developments to build sidewalks
- Focus should be placed on maintenance of the sidewalk system for an aging population
- Civic association reimbursements to encourage homeowners to maintain sidewalks
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- Sidewalks should be built and maintained to the same level as streets
- City should pay for maintenance. Sidewalks should be fixed first and then look at adding new sidewalks
- Enforcement of maintenance of sidewalks should be greater
- Consistent standards concerning things like drainage, buffer, etc
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- There should be variety to best fit the area
- City should be required to build and maintain the sidewalks
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- Priority one should be replacing dangerous sidewalks
- Create greater sidewalk vision – see how people fit into the plan
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- Grass buffers should be required
- Modes (transit, streets, etc.) should be balanced since each link is important
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- Prioritize sidewalks around bus stops and any transit facilities
- Better designs
- There should be a street-by-street analysis for streetscaping and design needs

- Design sidewalks based on street type and major corridors
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- Need to balance costs
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- If trees, etc. are put on sidewalks we need to ensure that they do not damage the sidewalk in the future. Head room need to be clear of limbs, or other obstructions, etc.

Areas of concern:

- Jonesboro Road/Park Ave
- Macon Drive and Lakewood Avenue
- Waseca Drive has bad design
- Habersham Drive in Buckhead

At the conclusion of the facilitated discussion exercise, H. Alhadeff thanked the members for their participation in the process and encouraged everyone to complete the On-Line Survey and to encourage their friends/colleagues to complete the survey as well. She reminded the members about the upcoming Planning Workshops and asked members to spread the word.

### **Written Comments**

- Well done. Enjoyed the variety of topics, right amount. Glad to see dedicated note takers
- Main presentation did not accurately report transit availability and negatively reported on too many instances that transit cannot or will not work. He needs to check his information and report correctly. Also, all of his examples were from Savannah, Irwin, CA – someplace else and not Atlanta. He talks about how to handle short and long trips, but did not tell us what our problem is here in Atlanta. His presentation was too generic – not specific enough. He praises Atlantic Station transit and does not recognize that they added transit as an afterthought. Transit could have worked better if it was planned as a part of original design.
- One idea: When you are asking us for solutions sometimes, we have no idea what possibilities exist; if you give us one of two possible ones, it helps us visualize and our ideas can move from there. Also, draw a picture of a problem situation then people can provide solutions much more easily



## Exhibit A

### List of Attendees

#	Last Name	First Name
1.	Barry	Rogers
2.	Beynart	Kay
3.	Bonacuse	MIKE
4.	Boronni	Alessandro
5.	Brown	Naomi
6.	Cobow	Drew
7.	Crawford	Douglas
8.	Donaldson	Naomi
9.	Dworet	Frazier
10.	Flocks	Sally
11.	Gordon	James
12.	Gravel	Ryan
13.	Greene	Edith
14.	Greenwell	Douglas
15.	Horn	Richard
16.	Hosking	David
17.	Ingle	Louie
18.	King	Cheryl
19.	Knowlton	Elizabeth
20.	Lam	Jeffrey
21.	McWilliams	Matthew
22.	Miles	Eileen
23.	Miller	Bill
24.	Narula	Navneet
25.	Olansky	Dianne
26.	Owen	Jeff
27.	Porter	Mary
28.	Richards	Cathy
29.	Riley	Thayra
30.	Rudy	Harvey
31.	Shah	Anuj
32.	Shah	Pradeep
33.	Snyder	Paul
34.	Tommie	Flora
35.	Touchette	Barbara
36.	Usher	Bertha
37.	Vivian	Matt
38.	Walker	Ron
39.	Wilkatis	Stacia
40.	Winter	Joe
41.	Zuyeva	Lyubov